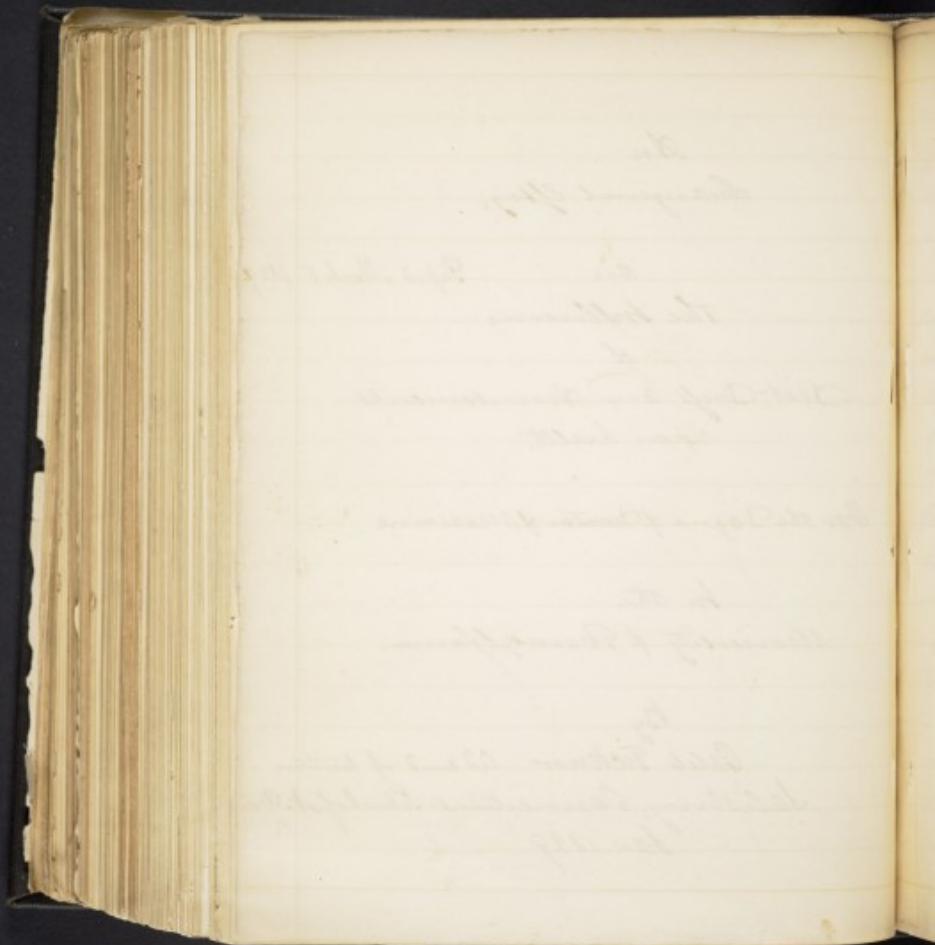


An
Inaugural Essay;
on Read March 5 1829
The Influence
of
Diet, Drift and Amusements
upon health;

For the Degree of Doctor of Medicine

In the
University of Pennsylvania.

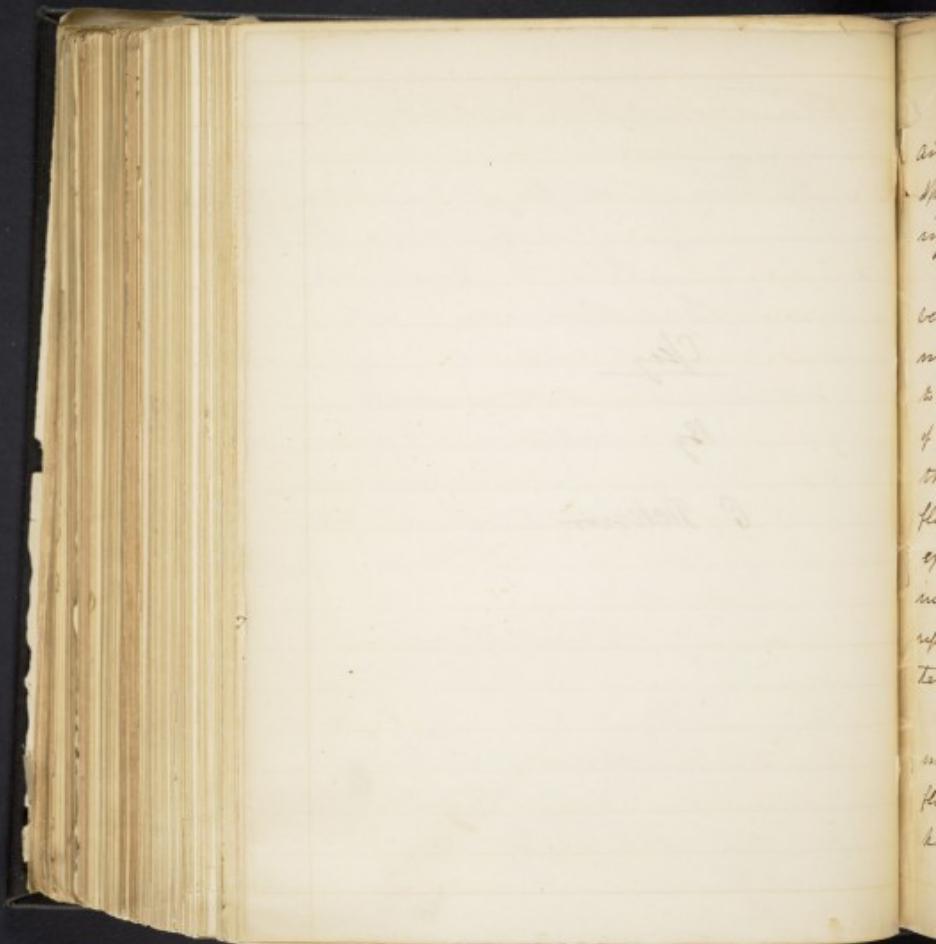
By
Caleb Ticknor - A. M. and of Western
Salisbury, Connecticut - School of St. John
Jan. 1829



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By

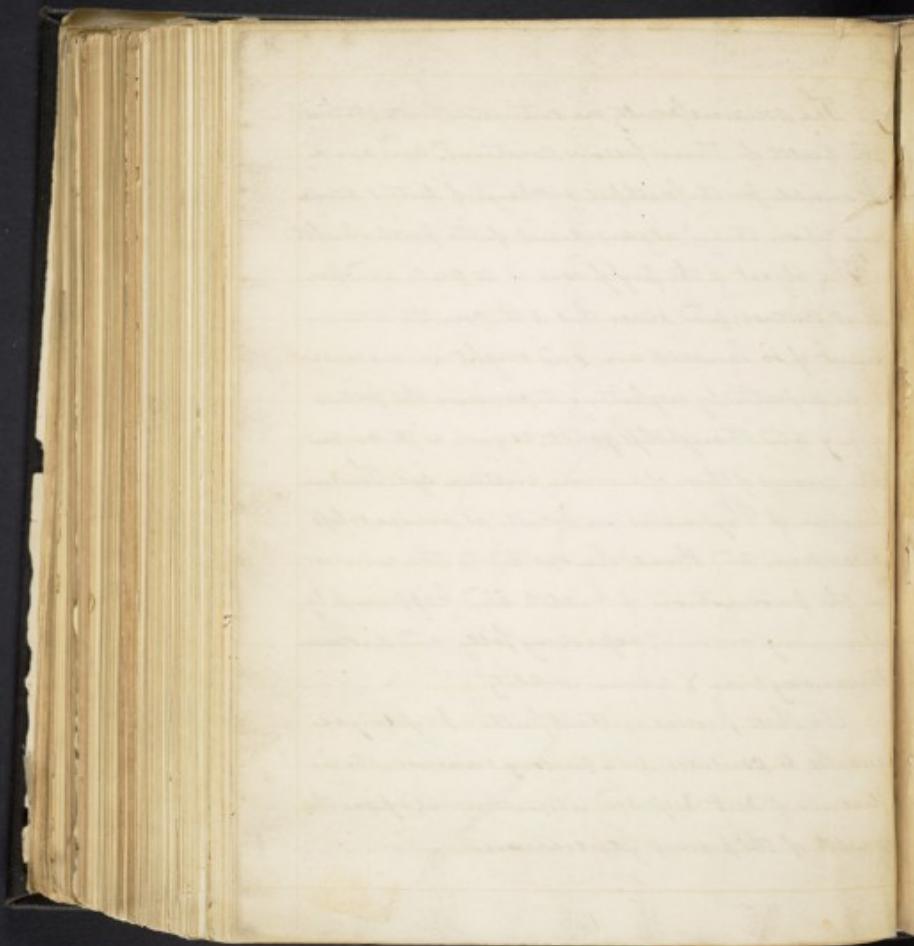
C. Ticknor



The medical faculty are entrusted with the lives
and healths of their fellow creatures, and are
responsible for the faithful discharge of duties devolv-
ing upon them as guardians of the publick health.

The object of the profession is to cure and pre-
vent disease; and since this is the case, the attain-
ment of so laudable an end ought in nowise
to be affected by neglecting to censor the follies
of gay and thoughtless youth, as well as to correct
the errors of those of a more mature age. Their in-
fluence on Physicians in Society is more or less
extensive, and should be exerted to the utmost
in the promotion of health and happiness, by
reforming error, reprobating folly, and discom-
penetrating vice & immorality.

We shall proceed, without further prolixity or re-
marks, to consider, in a cursory manner, the in-
fluence of Diet, Dress and Amusement, upon the
health of the present generation.



Diet.

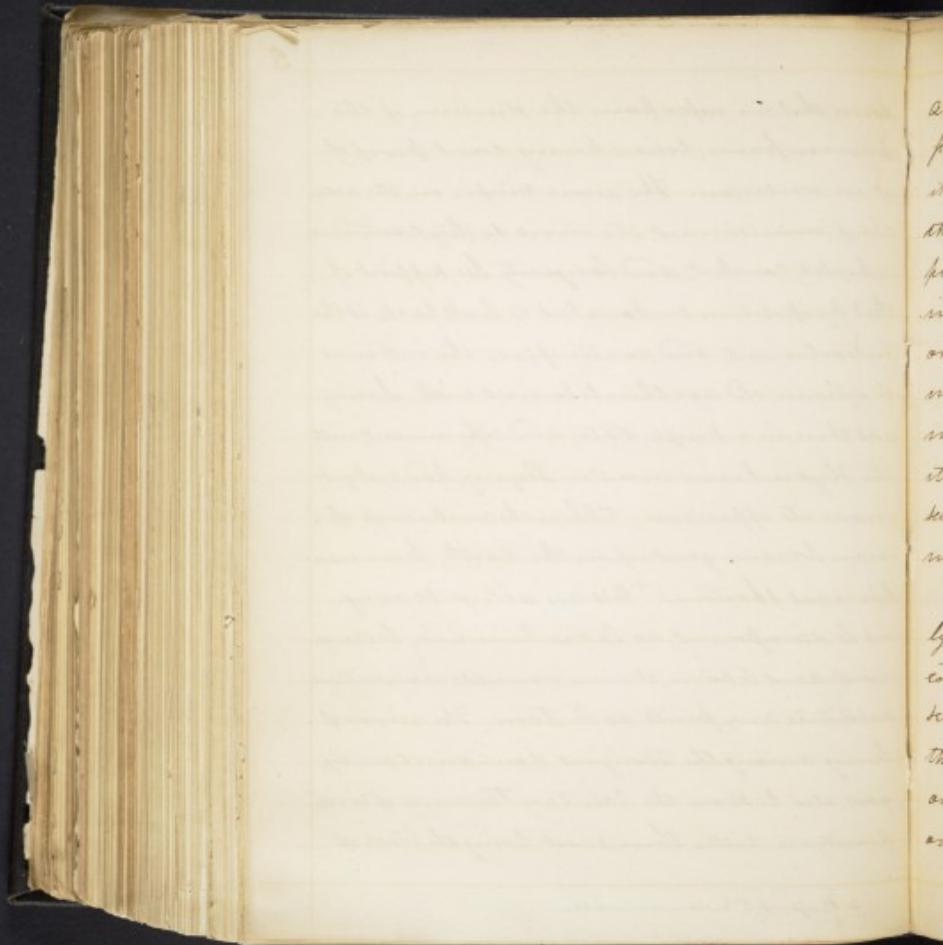
No one cause of disease produces effects more injurious or explosive than intemperance or improper diet. An article of food, if used without discrimination may be productive of disease; whilst, taken properly, it may add strength analogous to the Constitution; or it may produce unpleasant or injurious effects in one person, whilst in ~~another~~ it may prove altogether innocent, or rather wholesome & nourishing. These effects of diet, so different in different individuals, & in the same individual at different times, depend, in part on idiosyncrasy, in part on the state of the system, but most of all, on the distilled and assimilated character of whatever is derived in the shape of food.

The intention of the Creator was, evidently, that man should derive his means of subsistence from the animal & vegetable kingdom.

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down; this we infer from the structure of the human frame, besides having direct proof of it in revelation. The more simple are the articles of nourishment, the more do they contribute to health, comfort, and longevity. In support of this proposition we have but to look back at the antediluvians, and contemplate the intervals of extreme old age there to be met with. Society was then in a simple state; and refinement, with the Hyrcan-headed monster Luxury, had not yet made its appearance. When the number of man became great upon the earth, human life was shortened.⁺ This an allusion to sang.
 ent le dévouement de la vie humaine; le changement dans le climat, et une nouvelle nourriture substituer aux fruits de la Terre. The mode of living among the Aborigines of our own country, goes, also, to show the salutary tendency of simplicité in diet their meat being the flesh of

+ Bochart. Phistierimivelle.

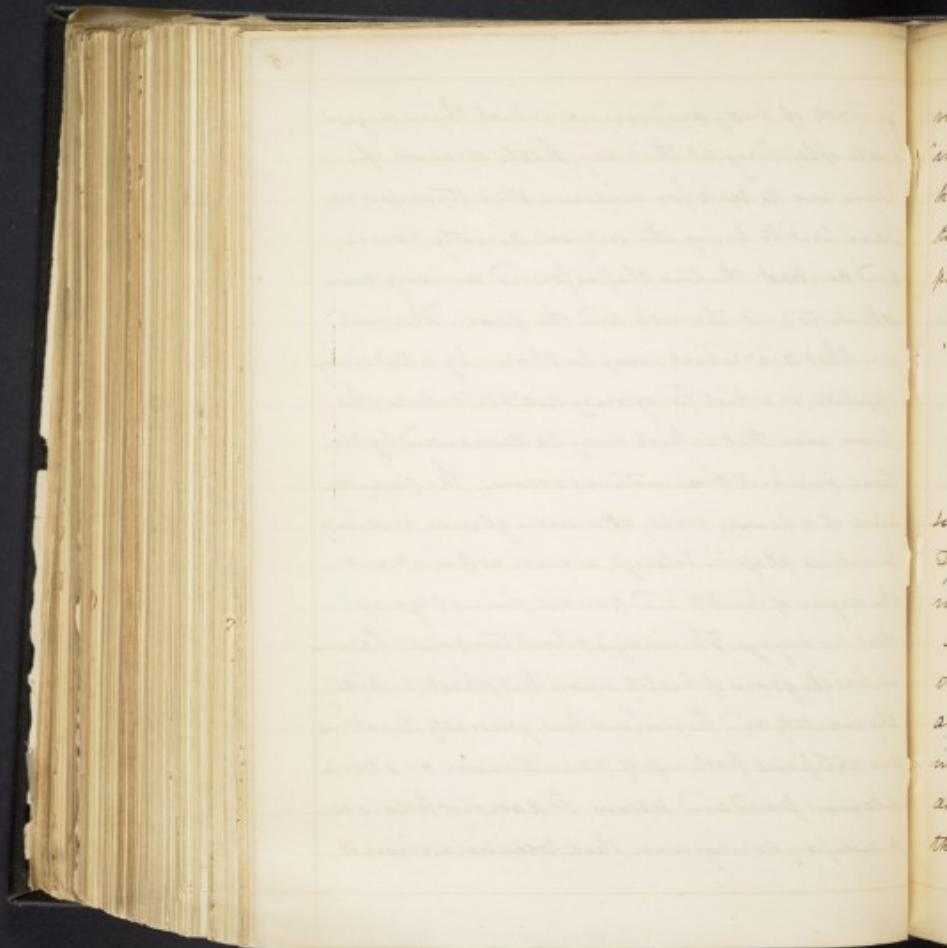


animals killed in the chase, or fish taken
from lakes and rivers, whilst their sole article
is the only beverage provided for man by
the hand of Nature. When do we find a peo-
ple that can equal those children of the wilderness
in enduring hunger and thirst, cold and heat;
or excusing fatigue in any undertaking? But
mark the change in their physical as well as
moral nature, on the introduction of the hab-
its of the white man, unless Christianity, at the
same time, diffuse its benign influence a-
mong them.

To draw proofs from these a little more nar-
rowly related to ourselves, we find none better suited
to our purpose than the Pilgrims, the ancient
settlers of N. England. Content, and even rigid, in
their habits of morality, and compelled to submit
on the most keenly sore, and accustomed to rigor-
ous exertion, they enjoy that health and even

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gy both of body and mind, which their aigen
erate offspring, at this day, little dream of.
Even one to seek for evidence still stronger, we
have but to bring the subject directly home,
and contrast the two classes found among our
selvs; to wit the rich and the poor. The rich
use that diet which may be chosen by a capricious
appetite, or which fancy may dictate, while the
poor use that which may be demanded by Na-
ture or which circumstances allow. The counten-
ance of a person will, at a mere glance, indicate
to which class he belongs, as well as point out
the degree of health and constitutional vigour
that he enjoys. The intelligent but temperate labour-
er has the glow of health upon his cheek, while
the wealthy and luxurious has, generally speaking,
an artificial pothump of countenance, or a com-
plexion pale and sallow. It does not follow so
a necessary consequence, that because a man is

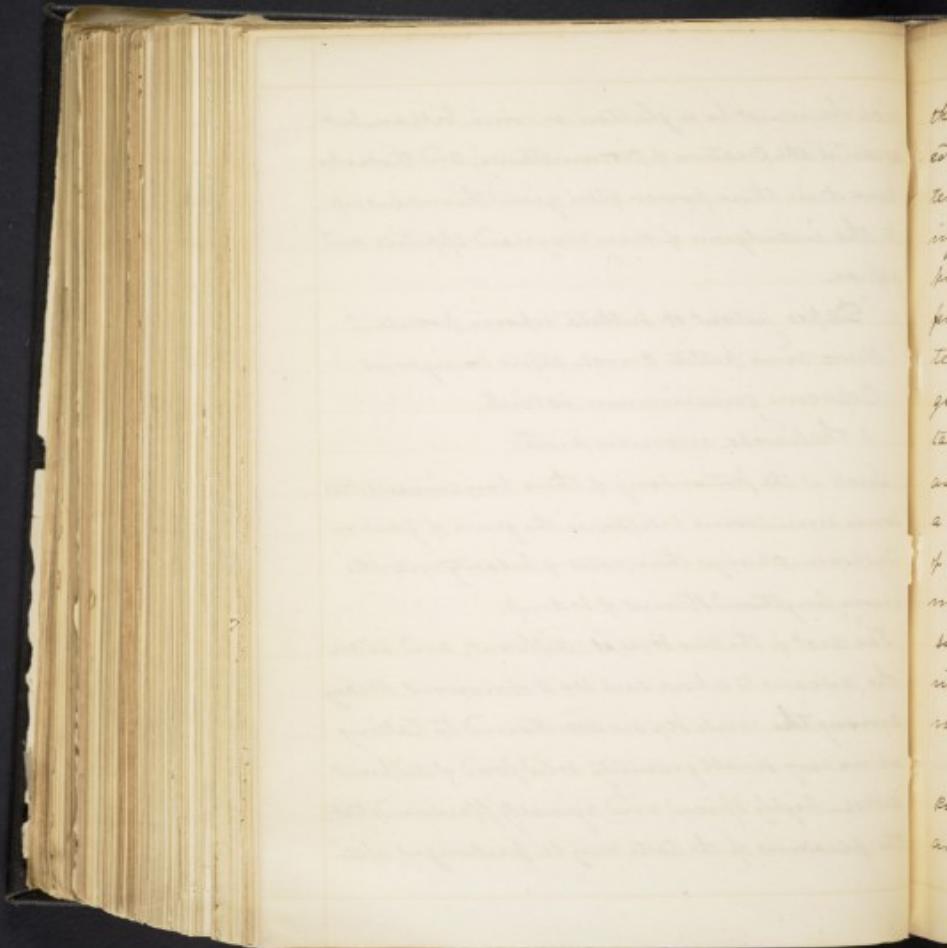


rich he must be a glutton or wine-bitten but
"man is the creature of circumstance," and thousands
have it in their power often yield themselves up
to the malady of every wayward appetite and
passion.

"Dapes jacent et sublata reponi pocula"
"Nunc cino pellite Curas atque benignius
Deprone quatinus letitia,
I Thaliarche merum riota.

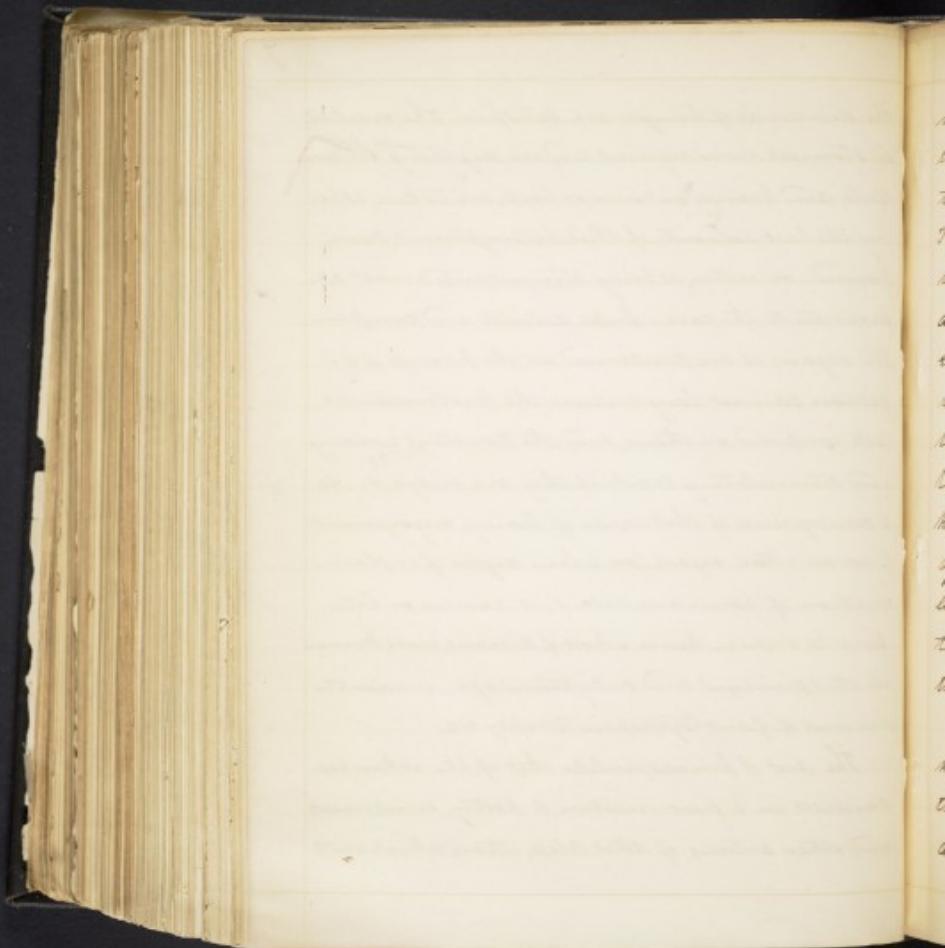
Such is the festive song of these bacchans, the
some unseasonable winter in the guise of gods or
Dyshippis changes their notes of hilarity into the
more languid strains of sadness.

The diet of the two types is different, and so are
the diseases to which each type is obnoxious. Many
among the male sex are accustomed to taking
in no very small quantity, solid food of different
kinds—highly spiced, and agreeably flavoured, that
the pleasure of the taste may be prolonged after



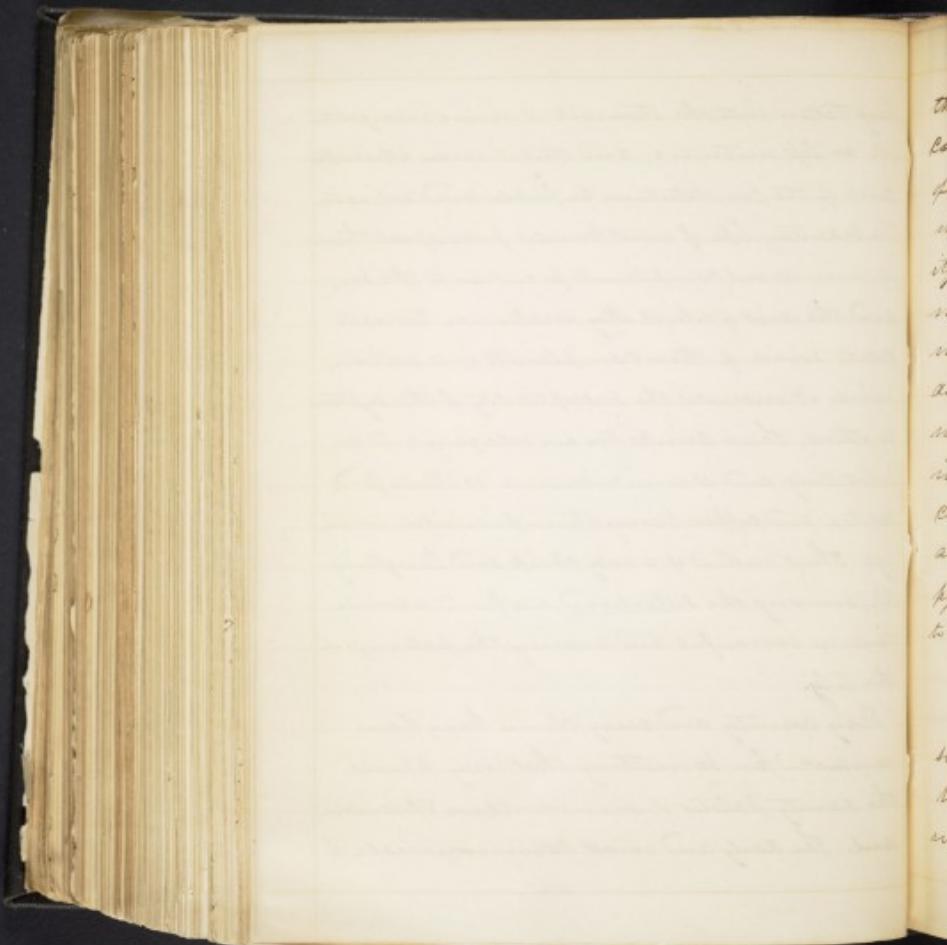
the demands of hunger are satisfied. The overburdened stomach now requires aid in digesting its contents, and brandy or wine, or bals., are taken, as being the best solvents of this heterogeneous compound; or rather, as being stimulants most appropriate to the case. Such delicate and complicated organs as are concerned in the process of digestion cannot long endure the protracted task imposed on them, and the constant grinding and stimulating to which they are subject. As a consequence of this mode of living, engorgement of some vital organ, or a low degree of inflammation of some another, is, sooner or later, sure to ensue - hence a host of diseases, well known in this civilized and enlightened age under the names of Gout, Dyspepsia, Dropsy etc.

The diet of pencils, unlike that of the other reg., consists in a great measure of pastry, sweetmeats, and other articles of that class, than which nothing



ing taken into the stomach is more indigestible or less nutritious; and this is more especially true if the constitution be feeble and delicate. The sedentary life of most females predisposes them to numerous complaints peculiar to the sex; and the art of which they make use tends to excite some of these complaints into action, while it increases the susceptibility of the system to others. Their drinks too are relaxing and debilitating, and as unwholesome as their food; hot tea and coffee being their principal beverage. Thus, instead of a rosy cheek and laughing lip, among the sisterhood, we find a countenance sorrowful and weeping the paleness of the lily.

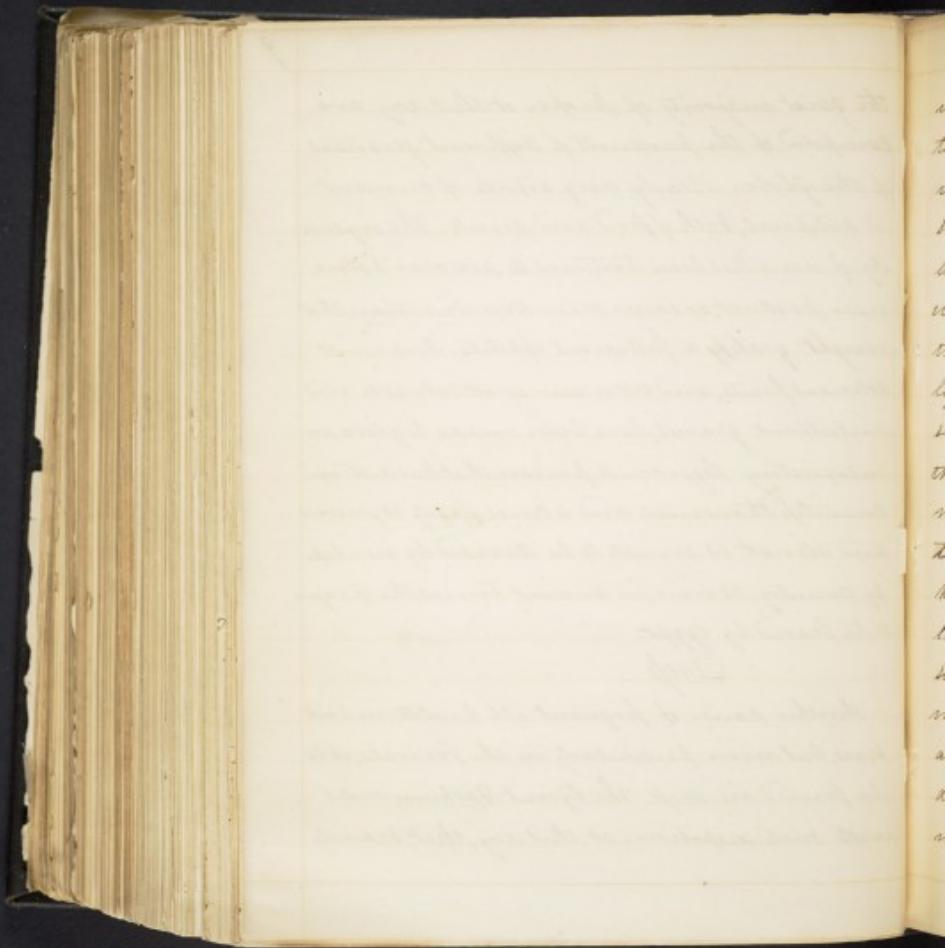
Every country and every climate have been visited for something that may please the vanity palettes of our modern Epicureans. The daily and most common meals of



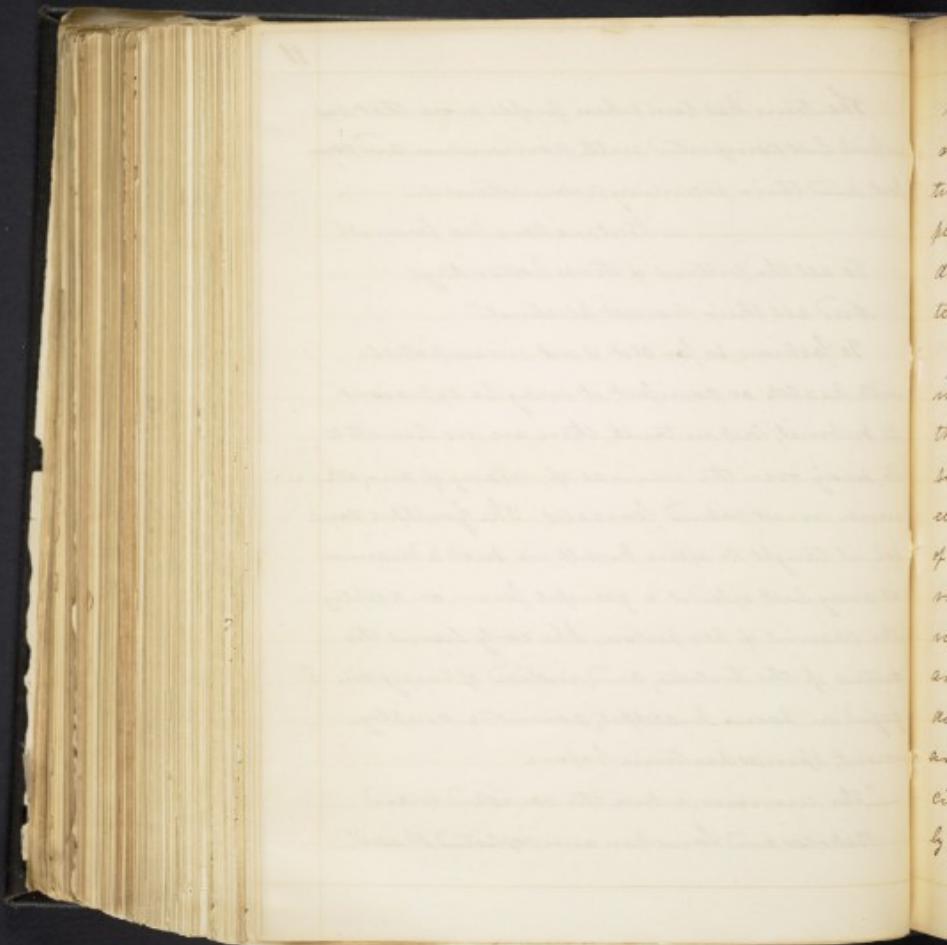
the great majority of people at this day, are composed of the products of different quarters of the globe. Nearly every article of our diet is artificial, both of food and drink. The ingenuity of man has been tortured to discover some new product, or some new combination, that might gratify a fastidious appetite. Our most delicious fruits, and even our most valuable and nutritious grains, have been caused to yield an intoxicating liquor - a poison that has destroyed countless thousands, and a curse nearly as general and almost as much to be dreaded by our ship by country, as were, in ancient times, the plagues to be feared by Egypt.

Diseases

Another cause of frequent ill health in both sexes, but more particularly in the female, is to be found in dresses. The tyrant Fashion rules with such aspotion at this day, that scarcely



is then to be found a ready listener to the dictates of nature and reason. The votaries of fashion sacrifice not only ease and comfort at the shrine of their sovereign, but even health and life are made to pay the forfeit of their folly and weaknessindangs. Even the outflowing from this source, confined alone to the gay and thoughtless youth, our bills of mortality would not be so alarmingly swelled as they now are. When the faded and wrinkled matron aspires to add new charms to her person, and grace to her termagant form, we are compelled to pity her weakness, and lament the degeneracy of these latter times". Maid and matron alike aspire to flourish in immortal youth; the mother lays aside the arts becoming her age and condition, and essay's herself, like the daughter, according to the prevailing fashion in the beaux-mores.

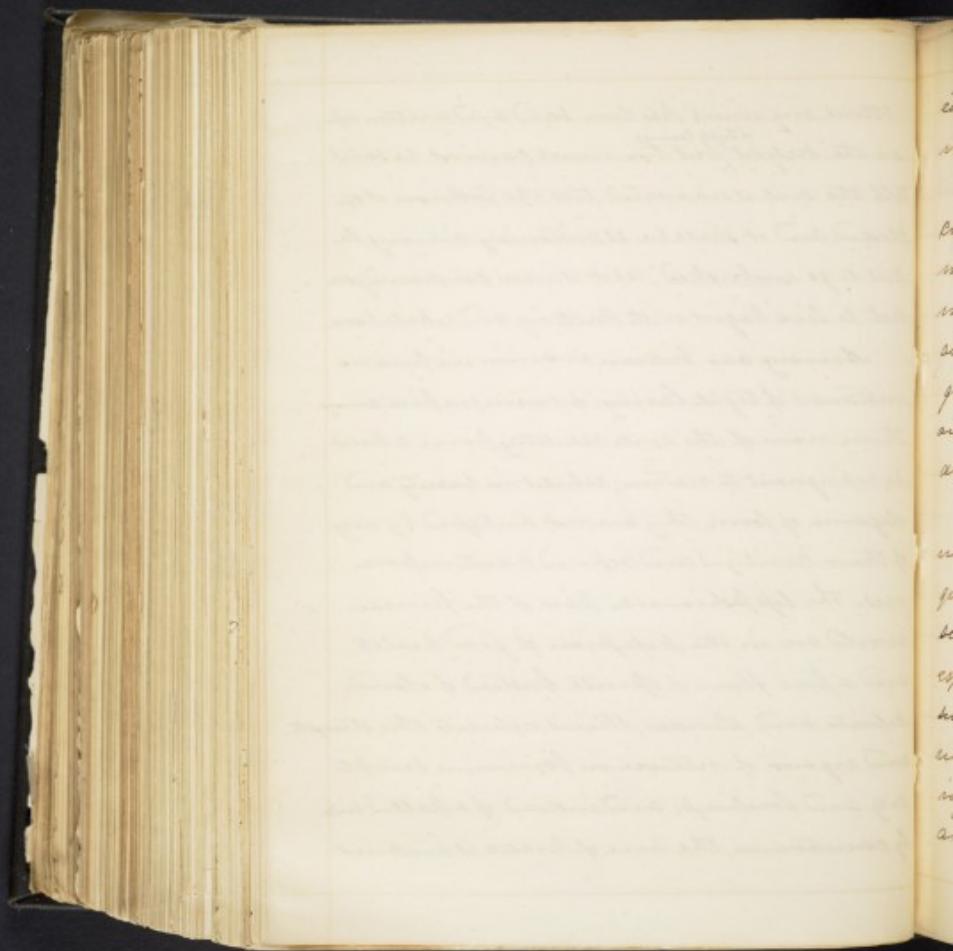


The time has been when people wore that by
which best comported with conscience and com-
fort, and their pecuniary circumstances—

— "But are have six pounds
To all the virtues of those better days,
And all their honest plakint."

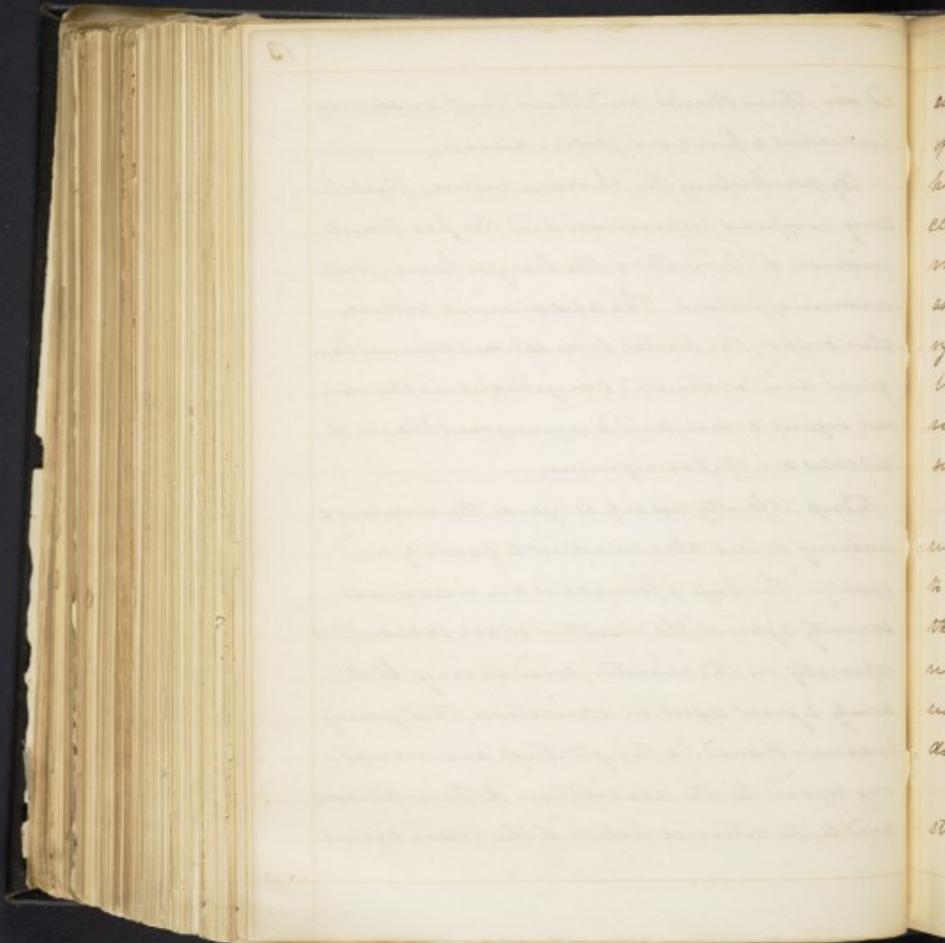
To fashion, so far as it is not incompatible
with health or comfort, it may be expedient
to submit; but in truth, there are no limits to
its sway over the minds of many of our, other
wise, most valued females. The youthful dam-
sel is taught to attire herself in such a manner
as may best exhibit a graceful form, or display
the charms of her person. She early learns the
duties of the toilette, and, instead of being em-
ployed in some useful, domestic employ-
ment, spends her time before

"the mirror, when the vanish'd man,
Beholds and loves her own reflected shaxi."



Much, very much has been said and written up
on the subject ^{of tight-lacing}, but too much cannot be said
till the evil is eradicated, till the fashion is ex-
ploded, and it shall be as customary among us
as to go unbrushed, as it is now considered gen-
eral to lie bestrid with hickory and whalebone.

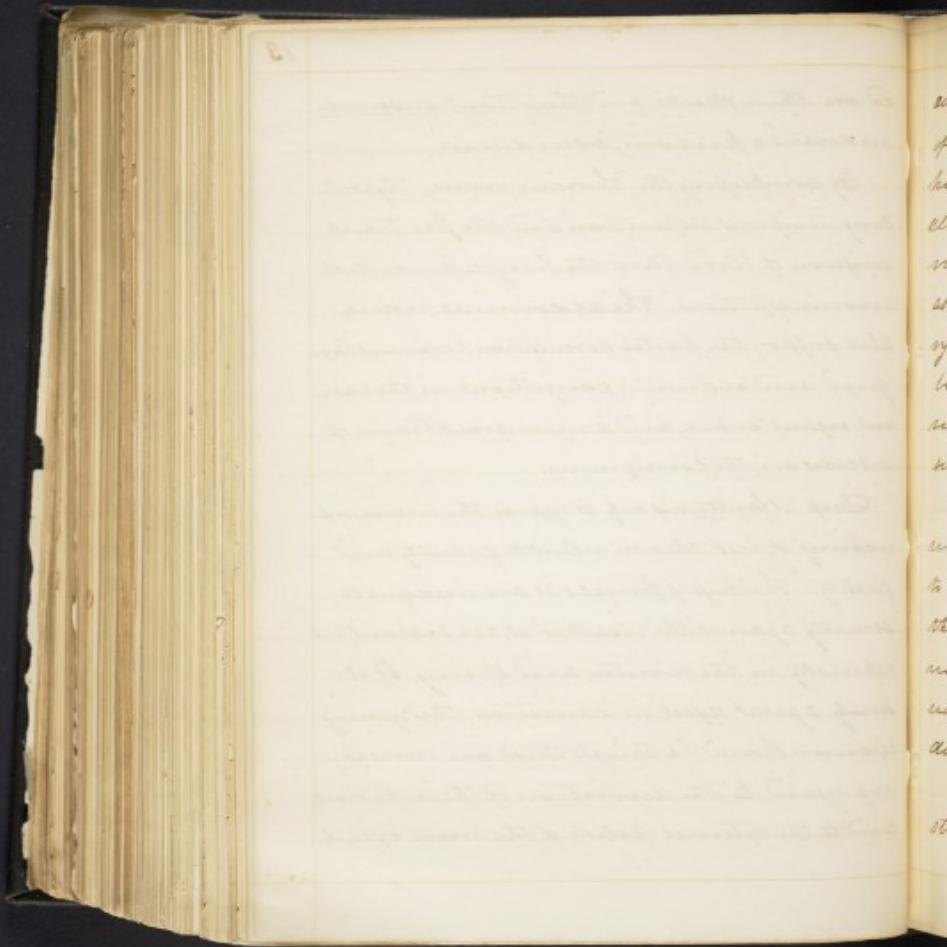
Among our brazen crew we find no
instances of tight-lacing; of course, we find among
them none of the evils resulting from a habit
so repugnant to nature; whilst in beauty and
elegance of form, they are not surpassed by any
of their civilized and refined contemporaries.
The less fashionable part of the female
world are in the possession of good health
and a fine flow of spirits. Instead of a form
delicate and slender, theirs exhibits the strength
and vigour of nature in formless simplicity
and boldness; and instead of a pallid sickly
countenance, the hue of health is impudent.



ed on their cheeks, and their tout ensemble indicates a freedom from disease.

By compressing the thoracic viscera, tight-lacing impairs respiration and the free transmission of blood thro' the lungs hence pulmonary affections. The abdominal viscera also suffer; the portal circulation becomes languid and obstructed, congestions in the various organs ensue, and a numerous train of diseases are the consequence.

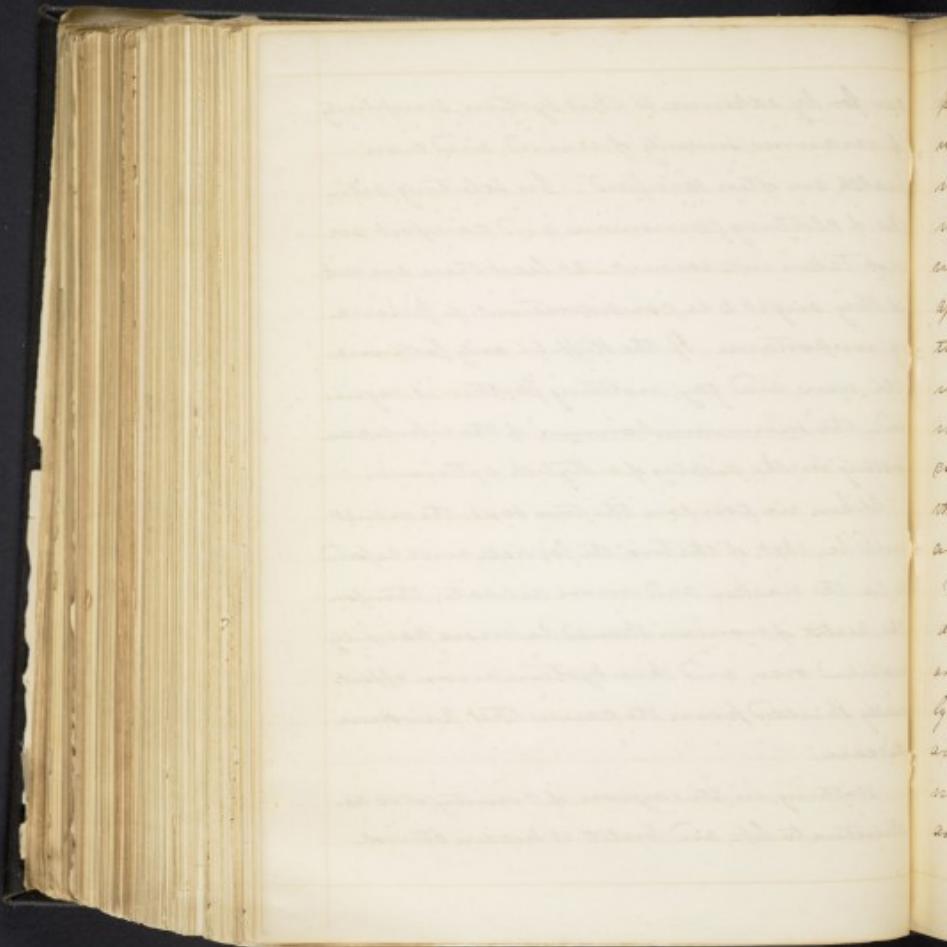
Dress it faults, not only as regards the manner of wearing it, but also in respect to quantity and quality. "The dress of females is an inadequate security against the weather at all seasons, but especially in the winter and spring. It is surely a great defect in education, that young women should be taught such an unmeaning regard to the decoration of their persons and to the external polish of the mere exterior.



cur; for by adherence to this system, simplicity
of manner, sincerity of mind, and even
health are often sacrificed". In selecting articles
of clothing convenience and comfort are
not taken into account— at least there are not
as they ought to be, considerations of prima-
ry importance. If the stuff be only fashiona-
ble, new, and gay, nothing further is requi-
red than the sumnum bonum of the whole can
exist in the display of a stylish exterior.

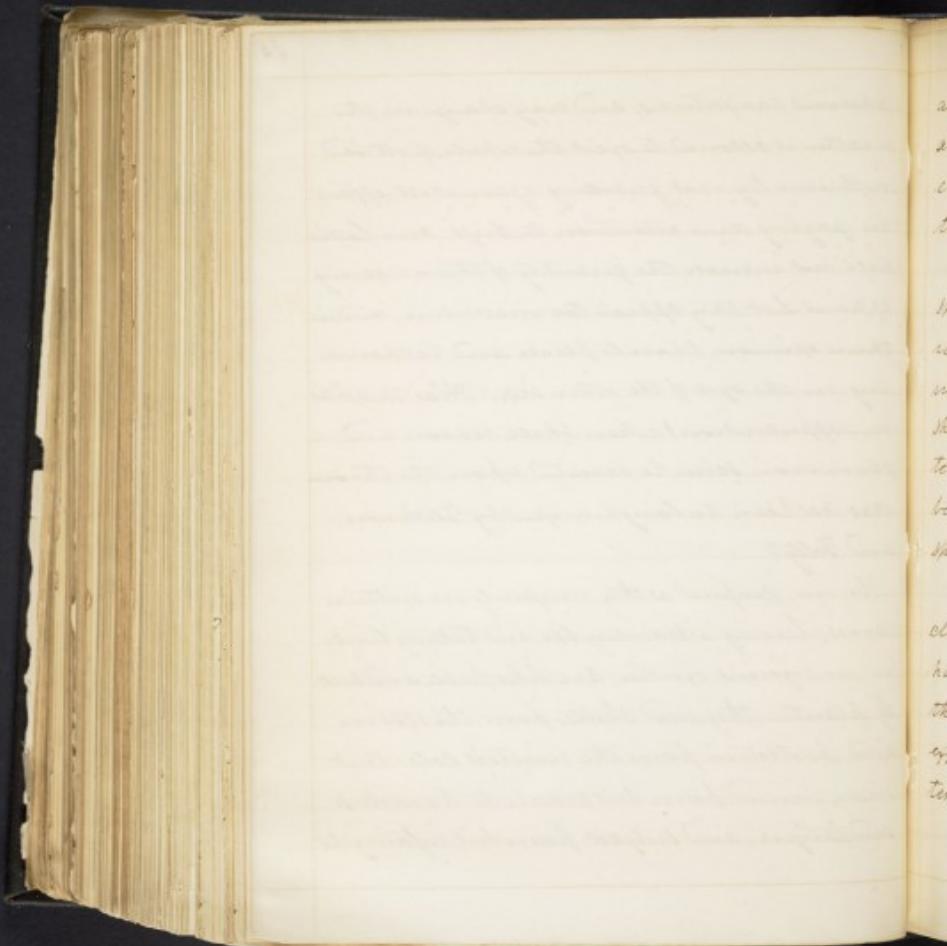
When we compare the two sexes, the result
will be, that, of the two, the female will be found
to be the weaker and more delicate; therefore
the health of woman should be more carefully
watched over, and her system more effect-
ually shielded from the causes that produce
disease.

Nothing, in this region of Country, is so ac-
tive to life and health as sudden storms.



physical vicissitudes, and every change in the weather is allowed to exert the whole of its sad influence by not guarding against its effects in paying due attention to dress. our ladies will not mention the quantity of their wearing apparel lest they appear too masculine, and in their opinion, cease to please and be charming in the eyes of the other sex. Has this fatal misapprehension! when shall reason and common sense be reseated upon the throne that has been so long usurped by Ignorance and Folly?

Woman, confined as they necessarily are within doors, leading a sedentary life, and taking little or no vigorous exercise, are like flocks and barky plants - they need shelter from the storm and protection from the winter's cold. But man, issued from his cradle to hardships and fatigue, and subject from his infancy to

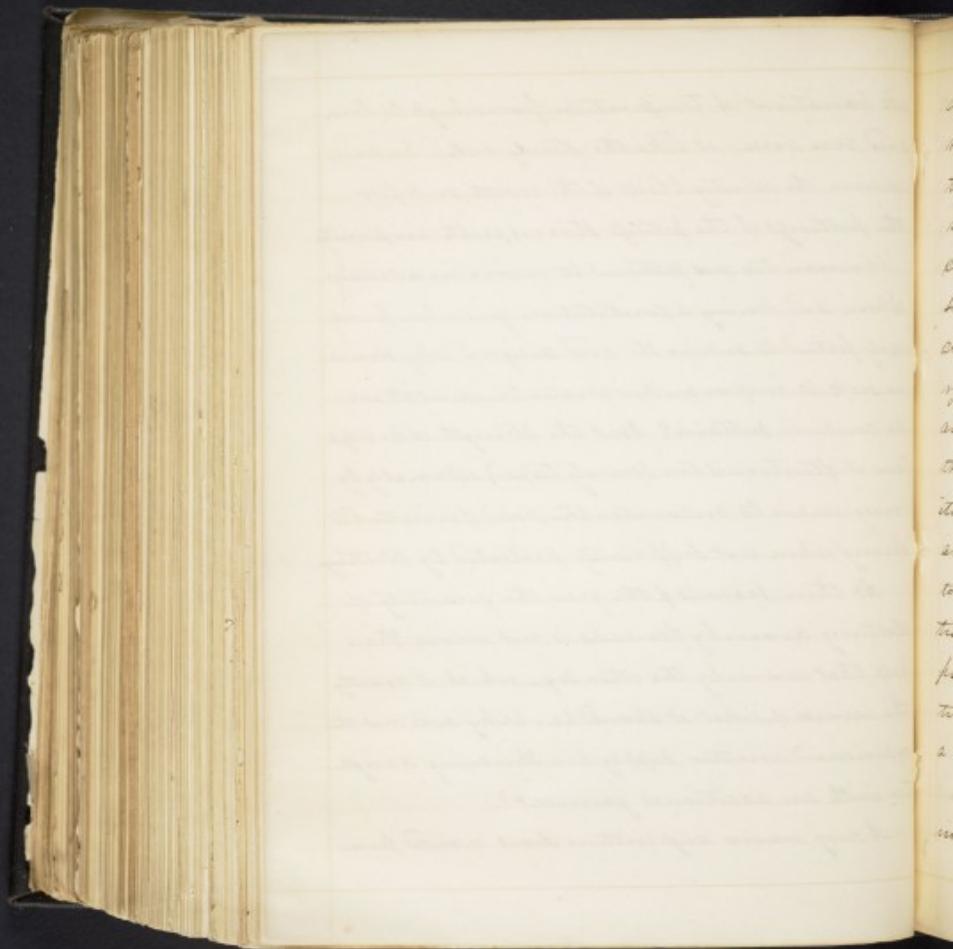


all variations of temperature from high to low,
and vice versa, it like the sturdy oak—can
endure the wintry blasts of the north, or suffer
the peltings of the pitiful storm, with impunity.

Woman too is subject to more in a certain
sphere; and having a constitution given her peculiar-
ly fitted to answer the end assigned unto her—
as well to impare on her greater burdens than
she can well sustain. But the strength of her fit-
ness is often times too severely taxed, especially by
being made to encounter the cold of unintoned
spring when not sufficiently protected by clothing.

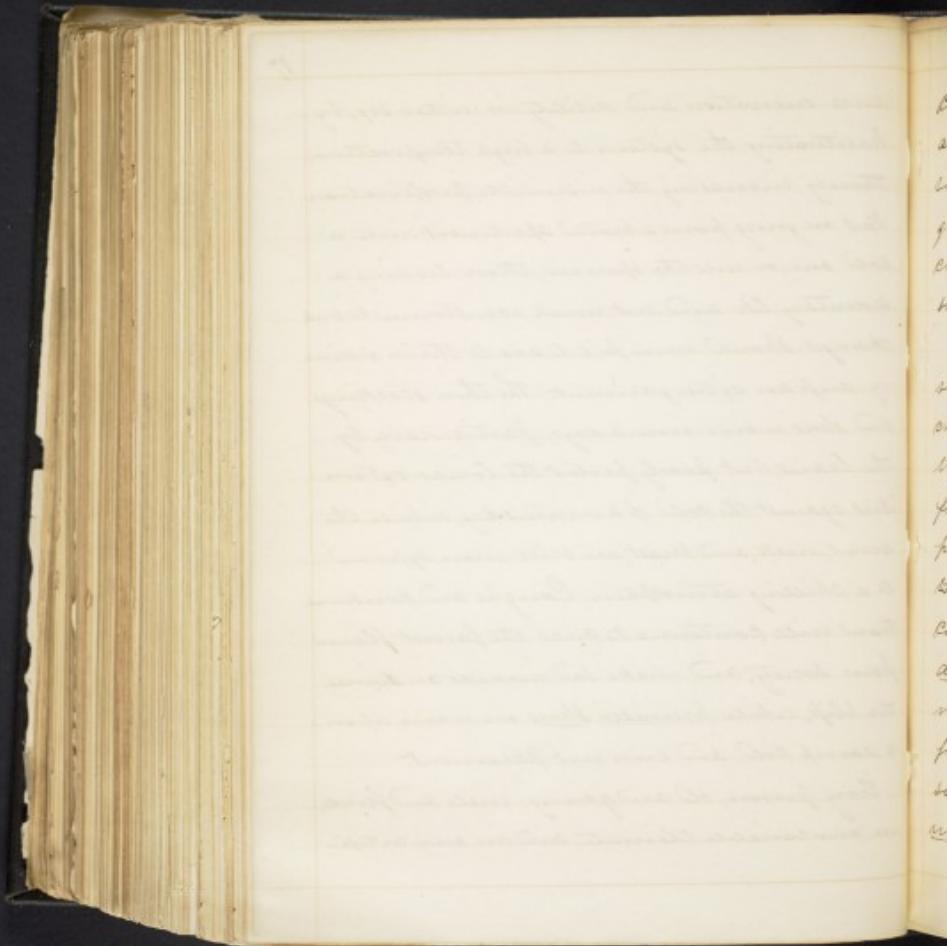
At other seasons of the year the quantity of
clothing worn by females is not more than
half that worn by the other sex—which is exactly
the reverse of what it should be. Why ever not the
experienced mother supply her shivering daugh-
ter with an additional garment?

A very narrow doorway within doors would pro-



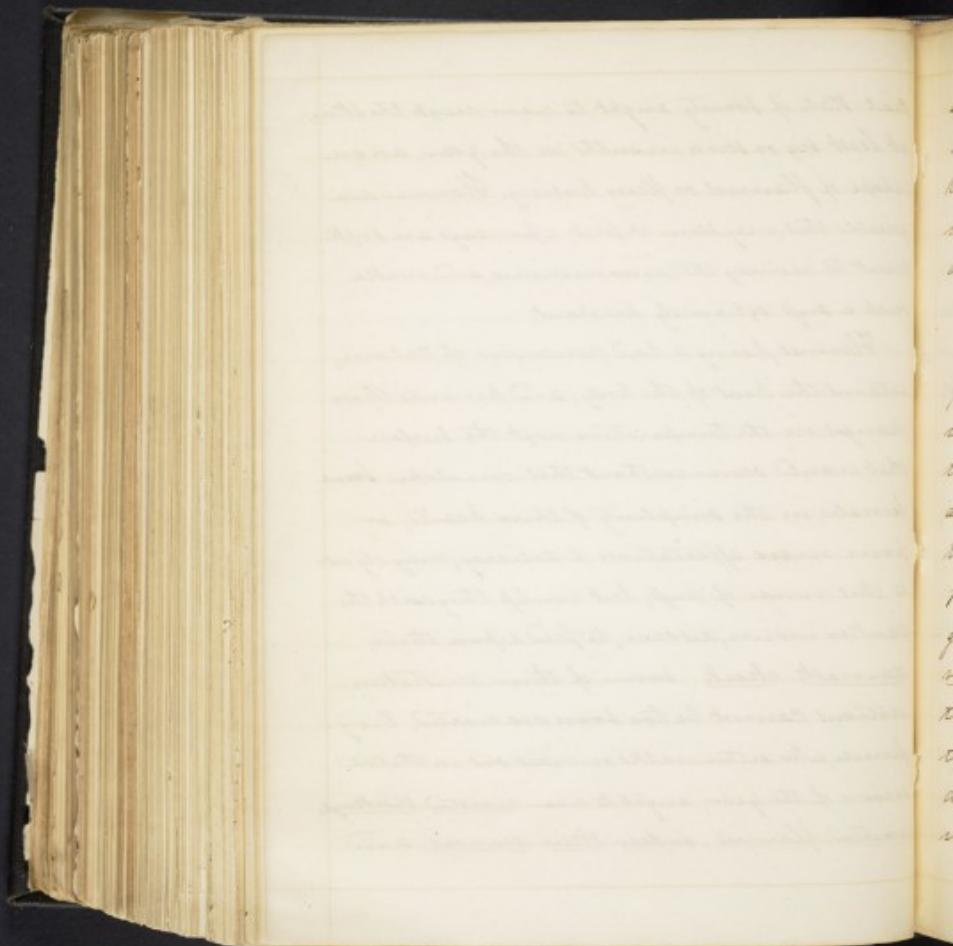
and evaporation and delirium in either sex, by habituating the system to a high temperature, thereby increasing the insensible perspiration. But on going from a heated apartment into a cold one, or into the open air, those leading a sedentary life and not much accustomed to such changes should never fail to add to their ordinary dress an extra garment. The thin stockings and shoes worn now-a-days, particularly by the ladies, but poorly protect the lower extremities against the cold of a winter day, while the arm, neck, and breast, are still more exposed to a chilling atmosphere. Coughs and contusions will continue to pull the fairest flowers from society, and make sad moods and sombre the bly, while prunella shows an hour upon a damp, cold, and even wet pavement.

Every person, old and young, male and female, in an variable climate, and in our arti-



Cial state of society ought to wear next the skin,
at least six or seven months in the year, an en-
velope of flannel or flery hosiery. You may also
quibble that may seem at first, a few days are suffi-
cient to remedy the inconveniences, and make
such a dress extremely pleasant.

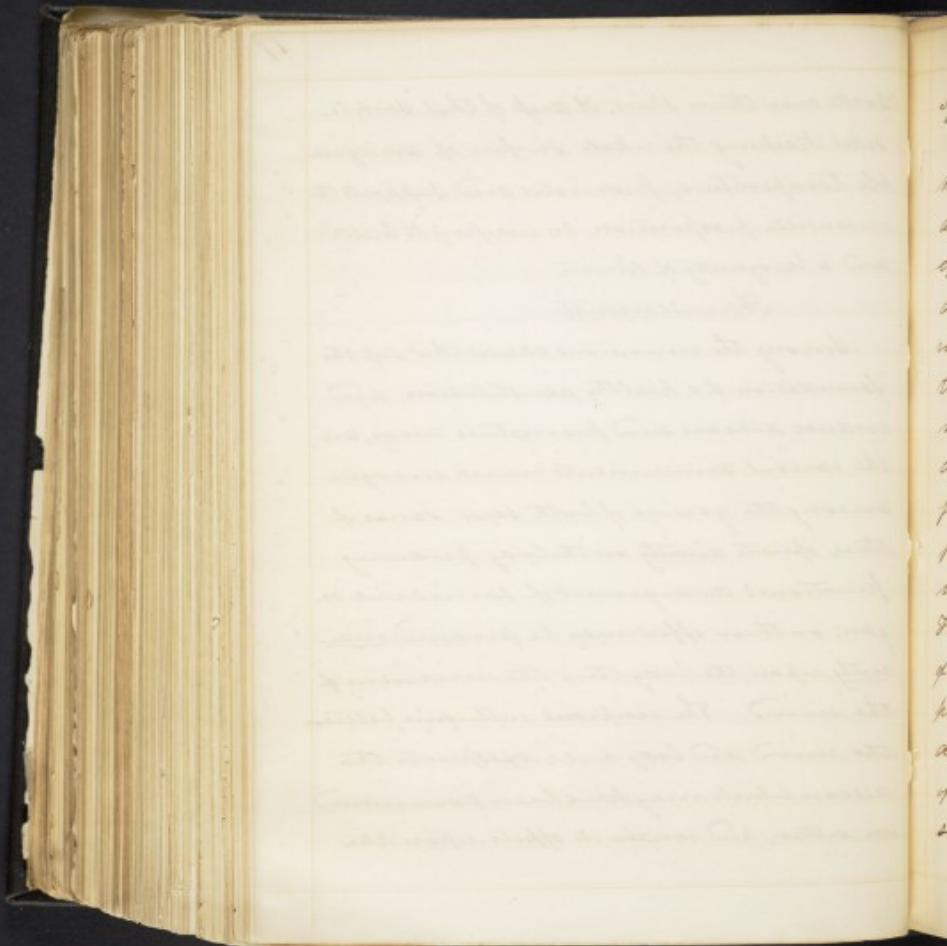
Flannel, being a bad conductor of caloric,
retains the heat of the body, and prevents those
changes in the temperature next the surface
that would occur without this envelope. Some
females, in the simplicity of their hearts, or
from mere affectation of delicacy, may object
to this mode of dress; but unless they visit the
canker worm, disease, to feed upon their
darned cheek, some of their mistaken
notions cannot be too soon eradicated. Every
female, who either walks or rides out in the cold
season of the year, ought to wear worsted stockings,
worsted flannel, or deer skin gloves, and



looks over their skin. A damp of that sort, besides keeping the whole surface of an equal temperature, promotes and supports the insensible perspiration, so necessary to health and a buoyancy of spirits.

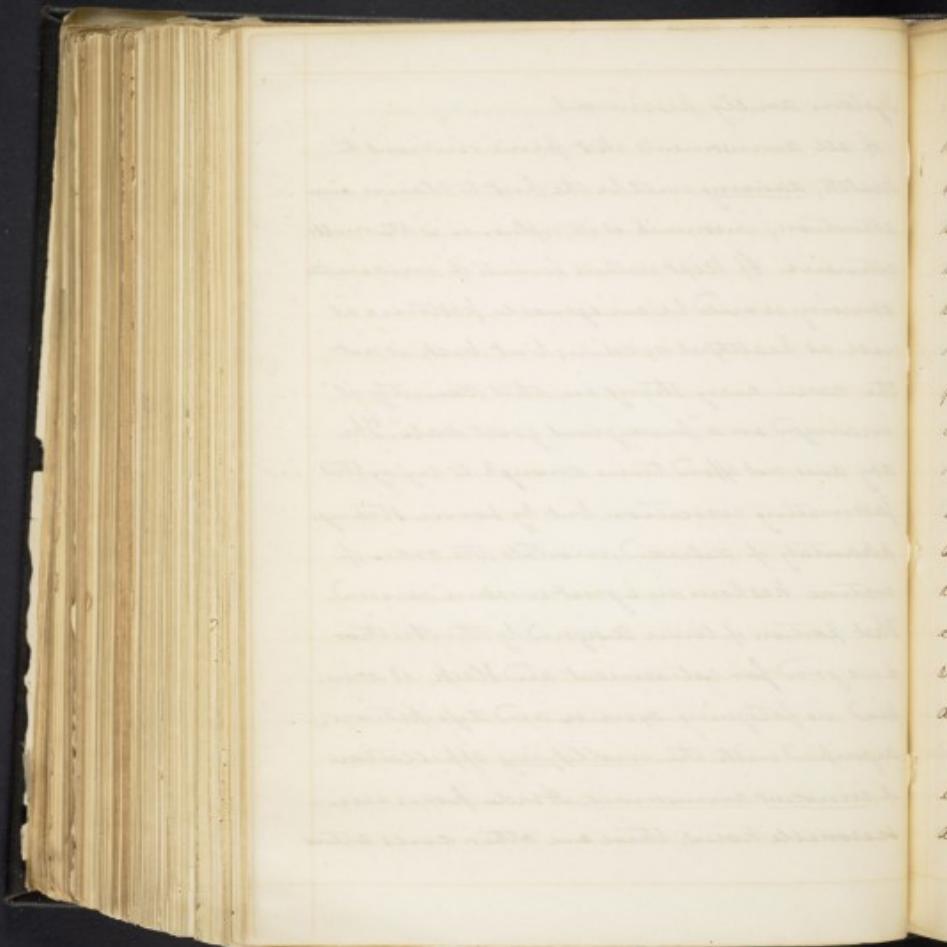
Amusements.

Among the numerous causes that sap the foundation of a healthy constitution, and induce disease and premature decay, are the various amusements much in vogue among the young of both sexes. Some of them operate directly on the body producing functional derangement of some vital organ; or their effect may be pernicious indirectly upon the body thro' the medium of the mind. The reciprocal influence between the mind and body will exacerbate the disease which may have been commenced in either, and render its effects upon the

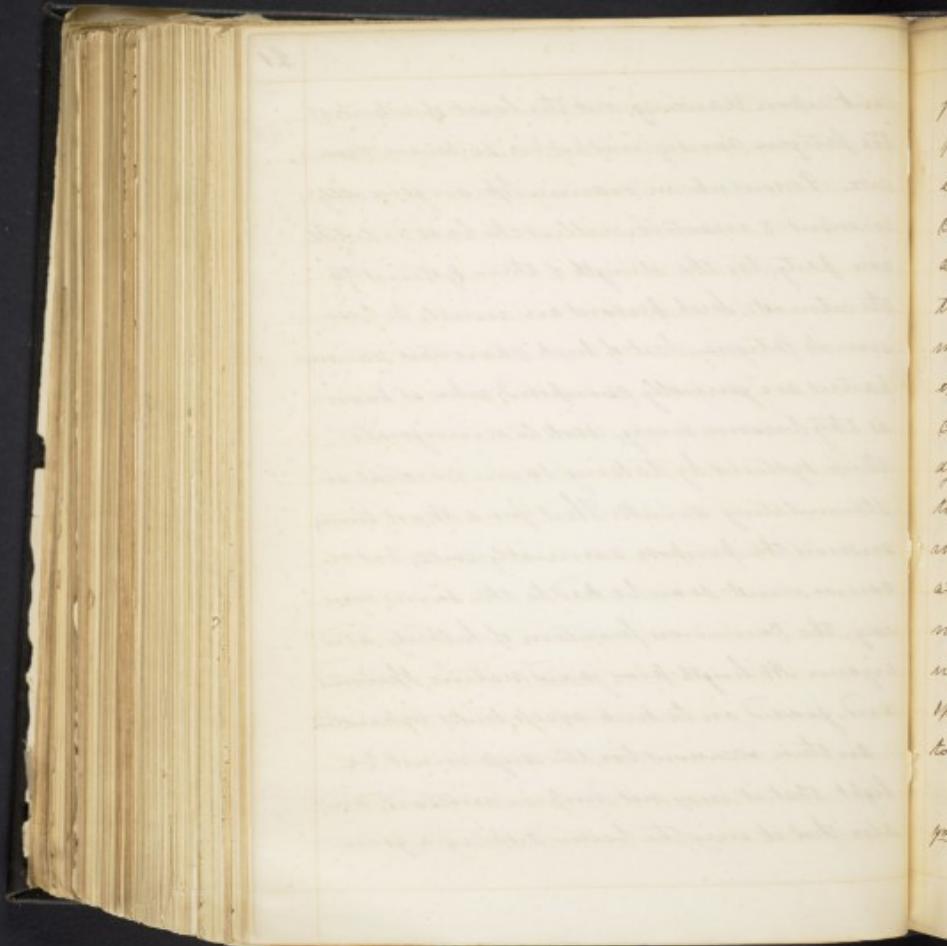


System doubly pernicious.

Of all amusements that prove ruinous to health, Dancing will be the first to claim our attention, inasmuch as its influence is the most extensive. If kept within limits of moderate exercise would be an agreeable pastime as well as healthful exercise; but such is not the case—every thing in this country is managed on a "prodigious great scale". The day does not afford time enough to enjoy this fascinating recreation, but by some strange perversity of deluded mortals, the order of nature has been in a great measure reversed. That portion of time assigned by the Author of all good for retirement and sleep, is occupied in fatiguing exercise and dissipations, dignified with the mollifying appellation of innocent amusement. Aside from unseasonable hours, there are other evils attend-

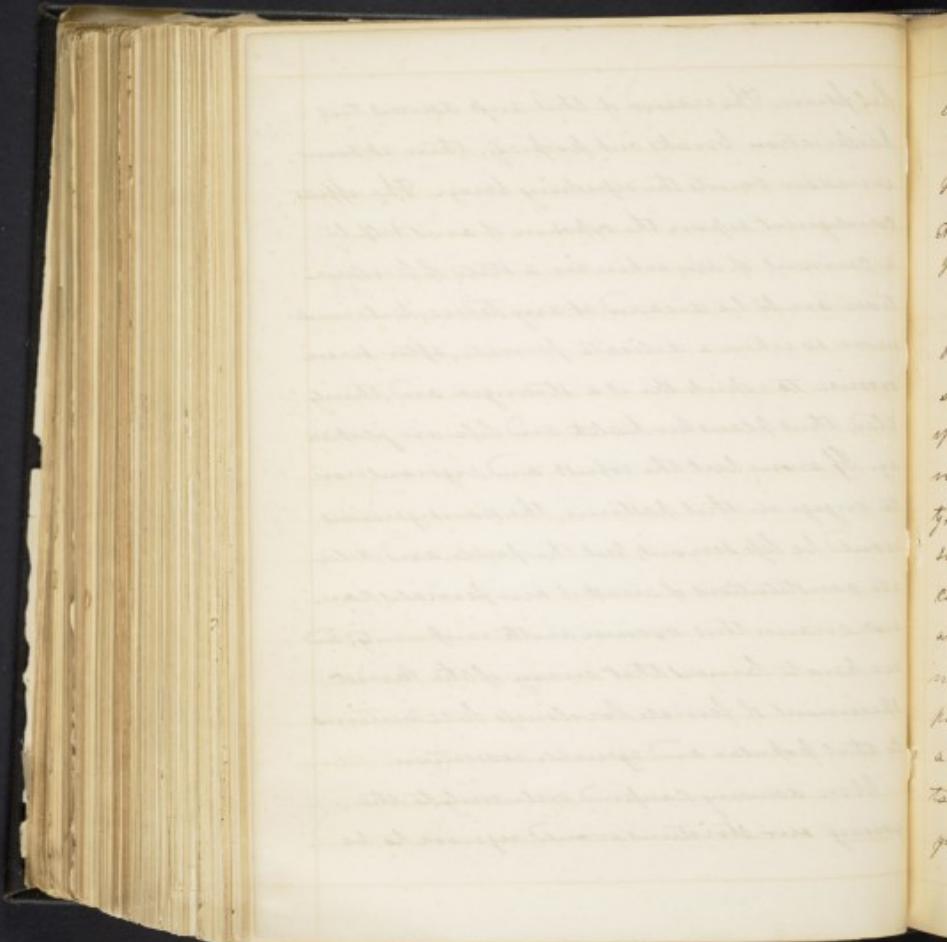


out upon dancing, not the least of which is
the fatigue consequent upon so severe exer-
cise. Persons whose ordinary life are generally
inert & inactive will, at the ball or cotill-
on party, tax the strength of their systems to
the utmost. Such persons are unable to bear
much fatigue. Men of such character having
parties are generally composed, who, as soon
as they become weary, seek to reinvigorate
their systems by taking some cordial or
stimulating drink. This, for a short time,
answers the purpose admirably well; but re-
course must soon be had to the same remedy
say, the common fountain of hilarity and
vigour. At length poor jaded nature, spent
and galled on her back except, finds exhaustion
on other occasions too, the wings must be
light that it may not impede motion; and
also that it may the better display a grace.



ful form. The wearer of this dress suffers till perspiration breaks out properly, then at some undress courts the refreshing breeze. The effects contingent upon the exposure of a woman's body to a current of air, when in a state of perspiration are to be avoided at any time; but much more so when a delicate female, after being exposed to which she is a stranger and thing clad, thus places her health and life in jeopardy. If none but the robust and vigorous were to engage in this pastime, the consequences would be less serious, but the feeble and delicate constitutions of most of our females can not endure this exercise with impunity; and we have to lament that many of the fairest specimens of female loveliness fall victims to this popular and agreeable recreation.

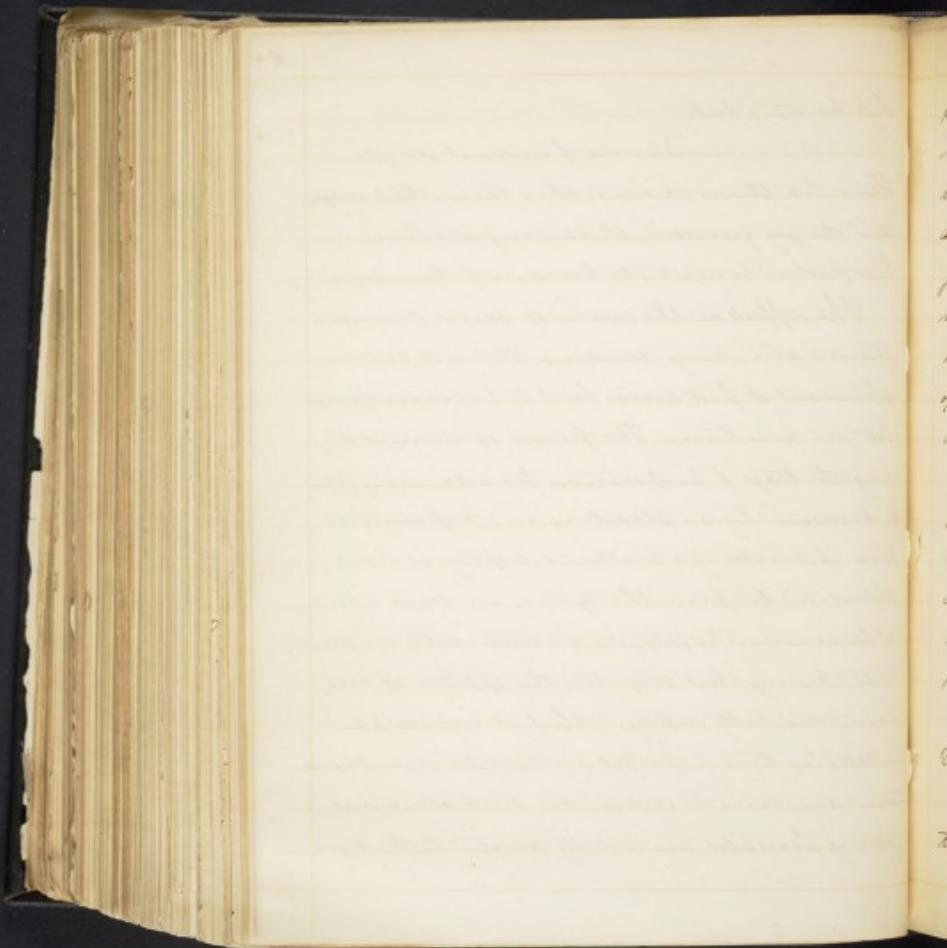
Our dancing confined exclusively to the young our strictures would require to be



lip pointed out.

"Dams of ancient days
Have led their children thro' the wretched maze,
And the gay granatin, skilled in gestic love,
Has picked beneath the burden of their bone."

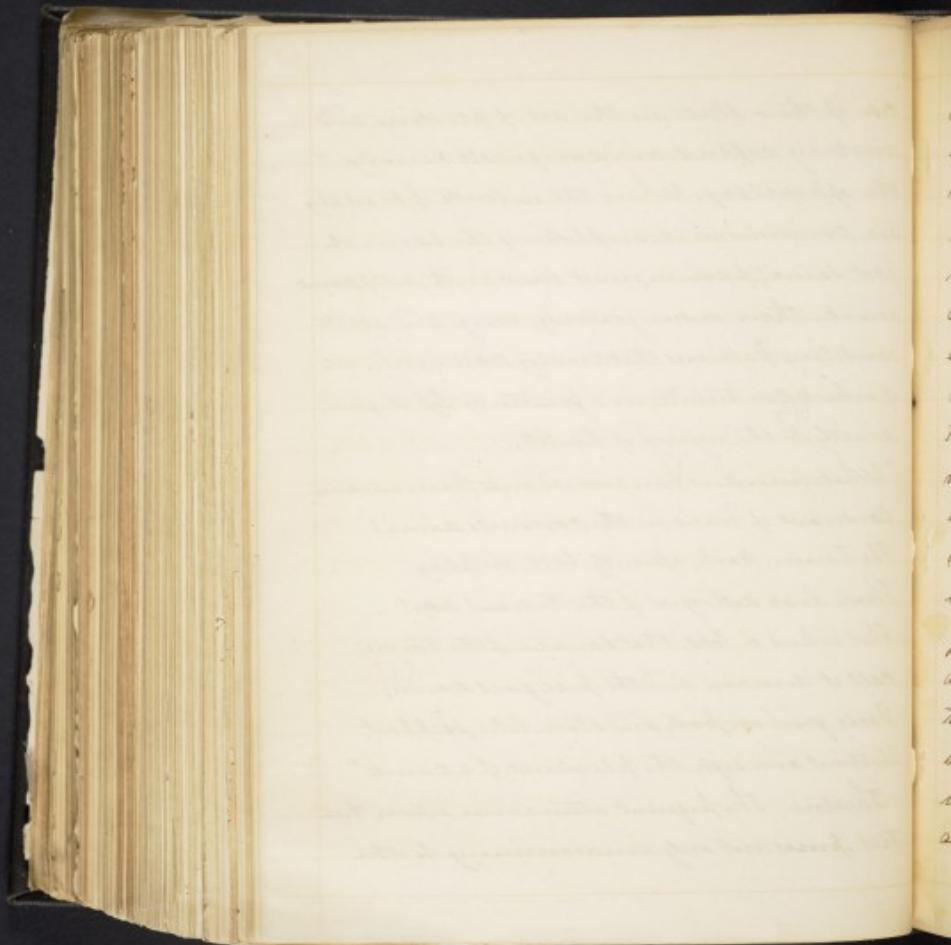
The effect on the mind of some circumstances attending dancing, tho' not so conspicuously at first, will fail to become manifest in autumn. The former excitement during the stage of preparation for a dancing party, produced by an absorbing and propulsive desire of making a brilliant display, is little calculated to place the system in such a state as to ensue the fatigues of ball with impunity. During this stage too, the appetite is suppressed or wholly destroyed; sleep is interrupted a certain train of what are called nervous symptoms are sure to occur. On such occasions young females are wholly devoted to the eyes



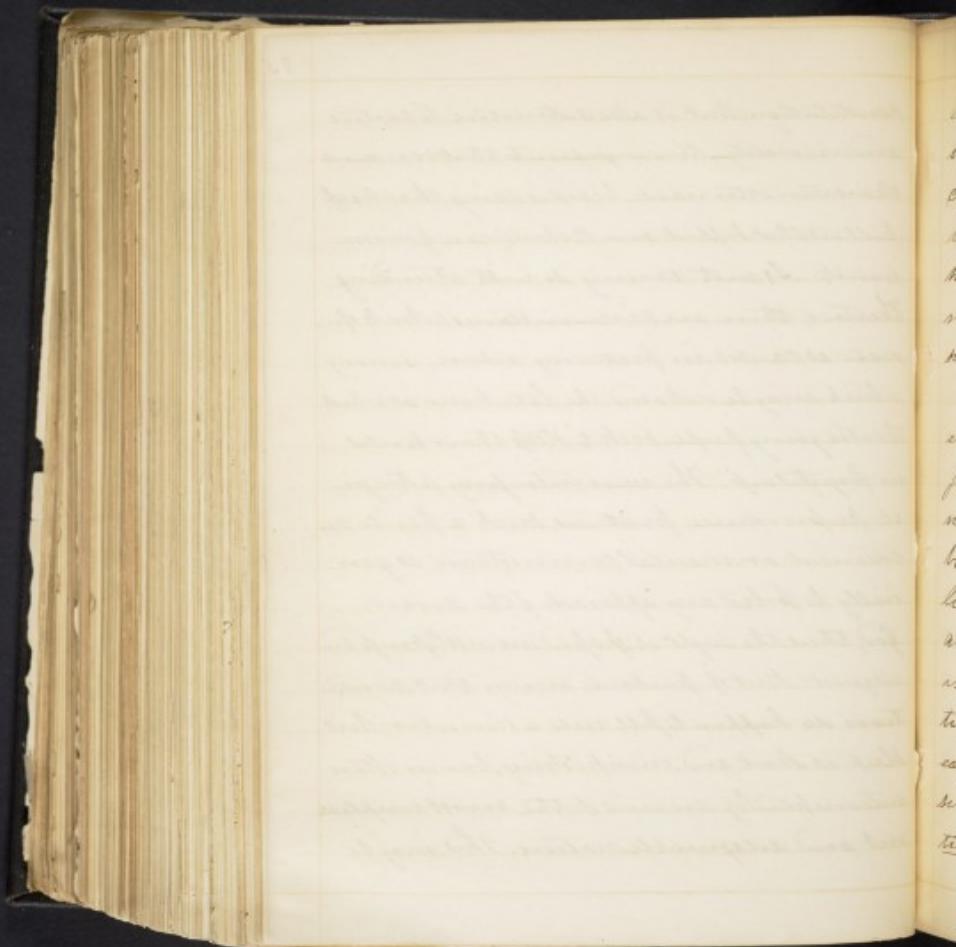
use of their skill in the art of plating and
making captives, and conquests among
the opposite sex. When the interests of so many
are concerned in accomplishing the same ob-
ject, some, of course, will run with less appre-
hension than entire jealousy, envy; and all the
rankling passions that rivalry can excite; all
of which contribute, in a greater or less degree,
directly to the injury of health.

"What numbers here crowd into some arena,
Conscious of merit in the coconuts dance!
The tavern, park, assembly, race, or play,
Those dear destroyers of the tedious day!
That wheel of folly, that baulter of the town,
Call it diversion and the piece goes down;
Tools given on foot, and stone like support,
Without a sigh, the pleasure of a court."

Theatres. The frequent attendance upon these
places not only undermining to the

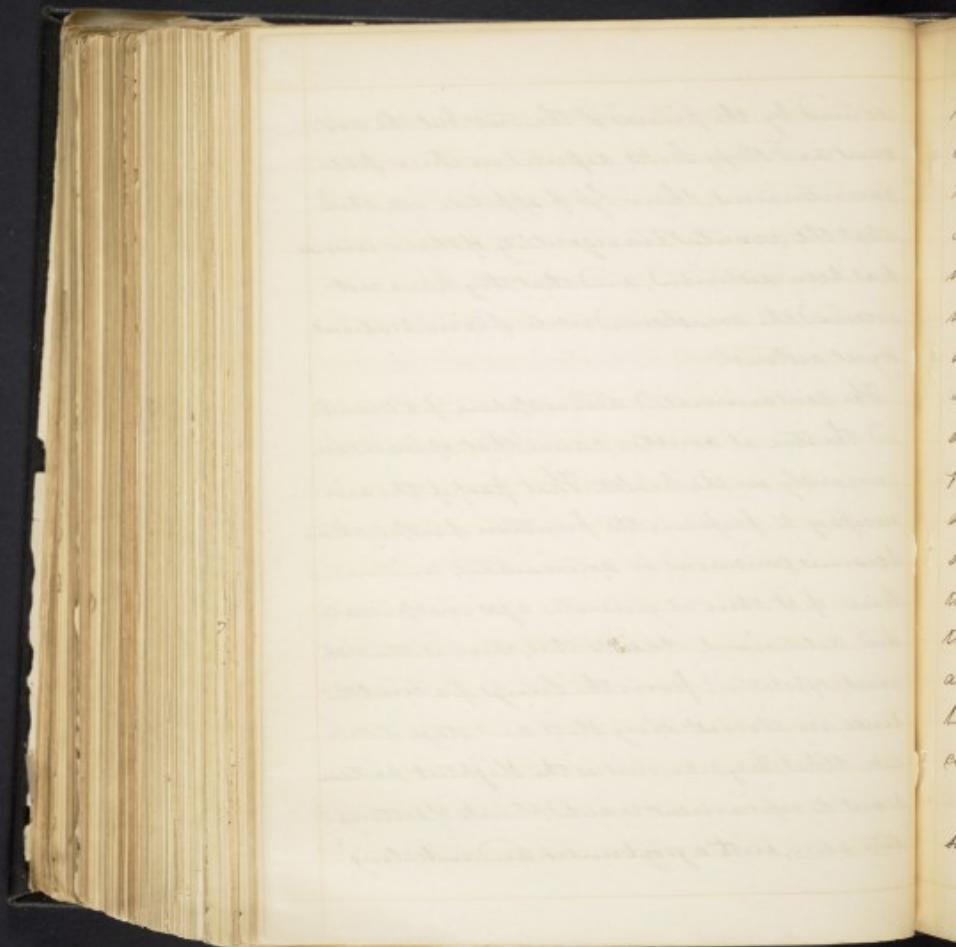


constitution, but it is also destructive to virtue
and morality, two ingredients that render a
character estimable, besides being the chief
pillars that support our Republican govern-
ment. As with dancing so with attending
Theatres, there are circumstances which op-
erate as causes in producing disease; among
which may be reckoned the late hour at which
the above young people seek to sleep their bodies
in forgetfulness. The more interesting a tragi-
cal performance produces such a fluid ex-
citement or mental commotion as gen-
erally to forbid any approach of the drowsy
God; thus the night is passed in restlessness and
agitt. Not of perhaps one in this condi-
tion do happen to fall into a slumber. His
sleep is short and unrefreshing, being often
interrupted by dreams of the most unpleasant
and disagreeable nature. This may be



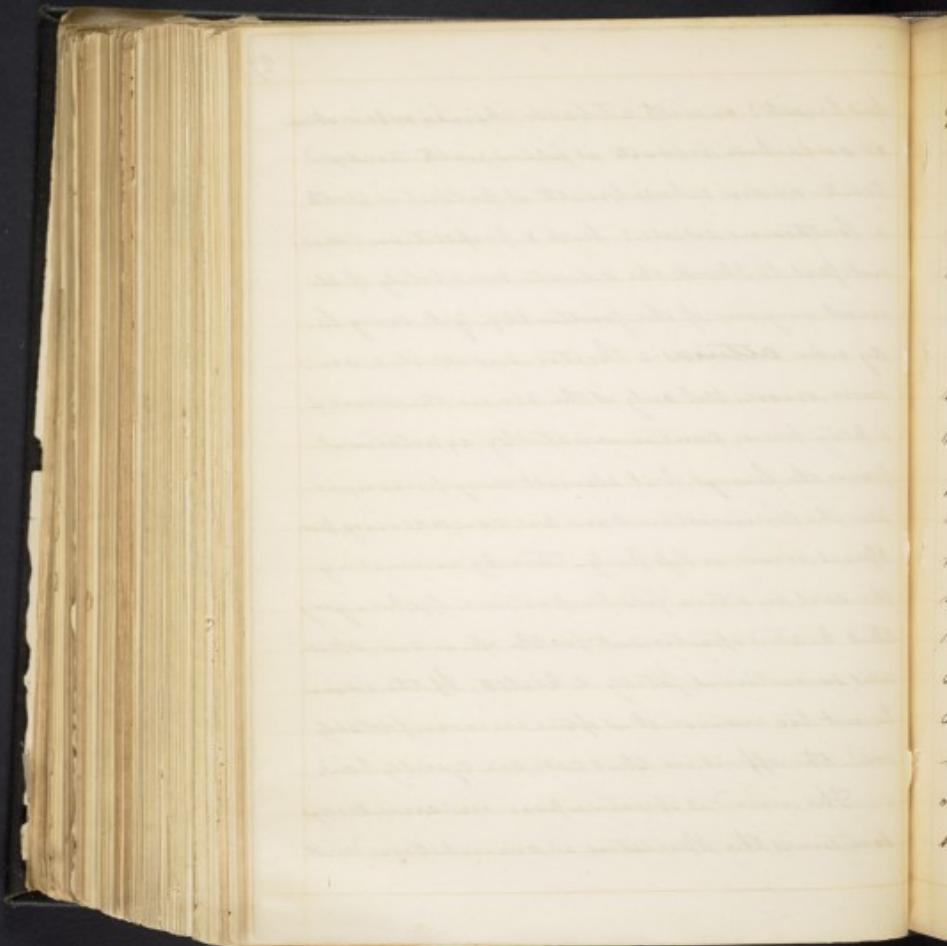
aroused by the pieces of theatre, but the weary and sleepy looks depicted in their pale countenances, their loss of appetite etc. show that the wonted tranquillity of their minds has been disturbed, and that they have not received the accustomed visits of kind Nature's sweet restorers."

The contaminated atmosphere of a crowded Theatre is another cause that operates injuriously on the health. That part of the air necessary to perform the function of respiration becomes polluted or deteriorated; and in lieu of it there is generated a gas insipid and deleterious. Added to this, there is the natural exhalation from the lungs of a multitude in almost every state and stage of disease. What say who makes the slightest pretensions to refinement would think of biting ~~the~~ a tree, with a gorged unclean and inhaling



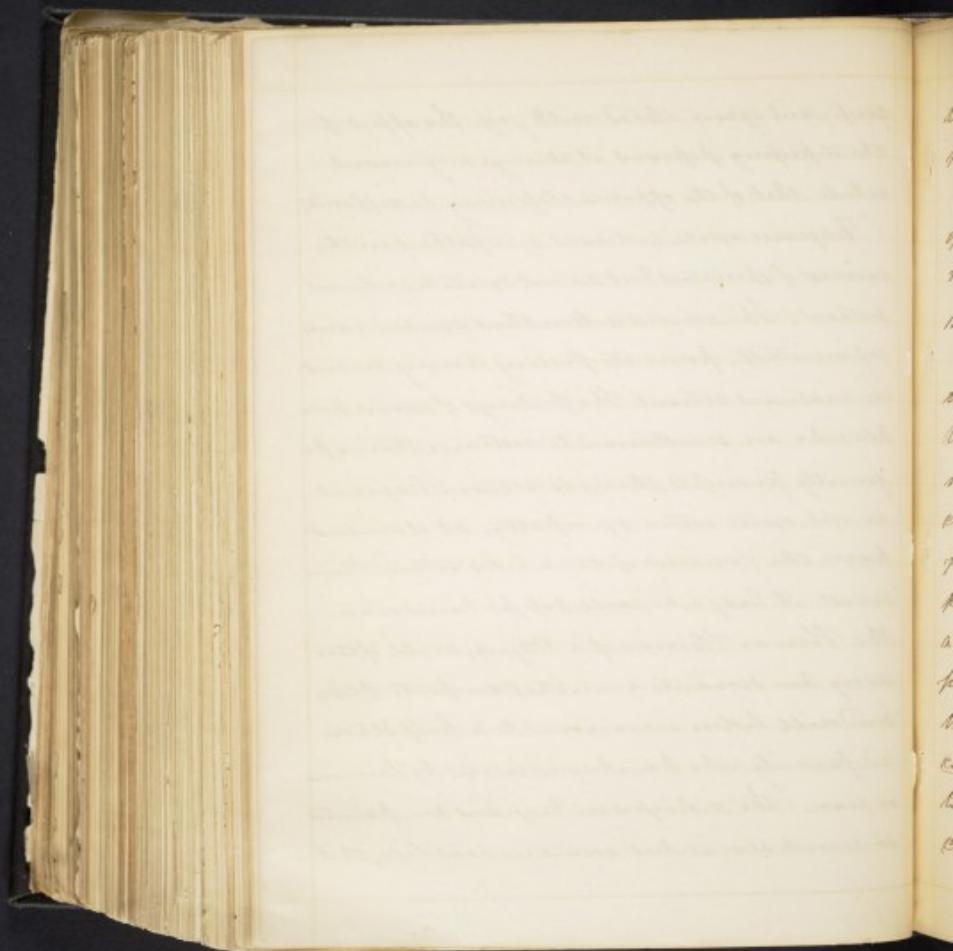
his breath? or with a tobacco-chewer, or smoker,
or one whose mouth is filled with decayed
teeth, or one whose breath is polluted with
a loathsome disease? Such a proposition could
not fail to shock the delicate sensibility of al-
most any one of the gentler sex; yet, every la-
dy who attends a theatre sees all this, and
even more. Not only is the air in the room of
a play house contaminated by exhalations
from the lungs, but almost every person, un-
der the circumstances we are considering, per-
spires more or less freely—thusly increasing
the evil in a true fold proportion. Exchanging
this heated apartment for the open air, oper-
ates sometimes fatally to health. If the room
be not too warm, it is often uncomfortably
cold—the effects in this case are equally bad.

The mind is operated upon in various ways—
sometimes the spectator is overwhelmed with



grief, and again elated with joy. The effect of
the depressing picture is always injurious,
while that of the opposite class may be different.

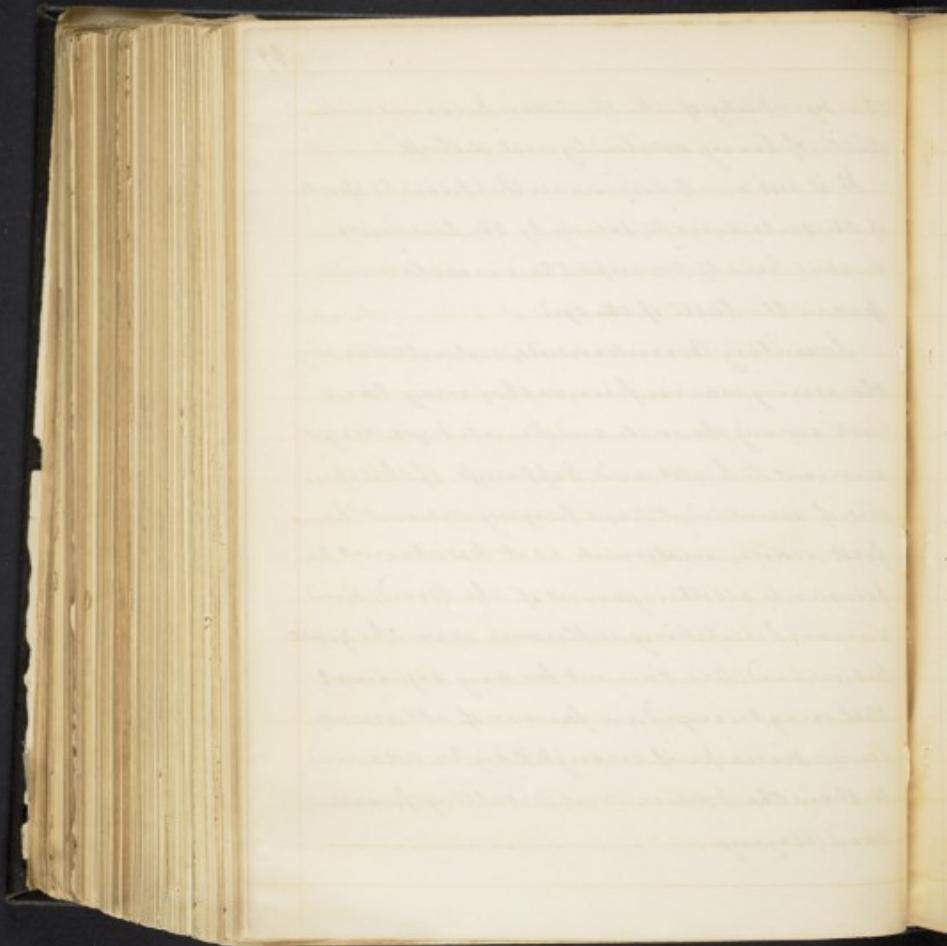
"Tragedies excite virtuous sympathy in the
minds of spectators but do not excite virtuous
action. The mind when thus excited reacts
upon itself, from its feeling having no end
in virtuous actions. The feelings of some peo-
ple who are accustomed to restrain themselves
greatly prompts them to action. Tragedies
do not excite active sympathy, as is evident
from the conduct of those who attend them
most. A Lady who will sit for hours over
the flow or flesome of a tragedy, will often
deny her servants even the comforts of life,
and will listen unmoved to a half starv-
ed family who have been ruined by famine
or war. The distresses in tragedies are painted
so much greater than occurs in real life, that



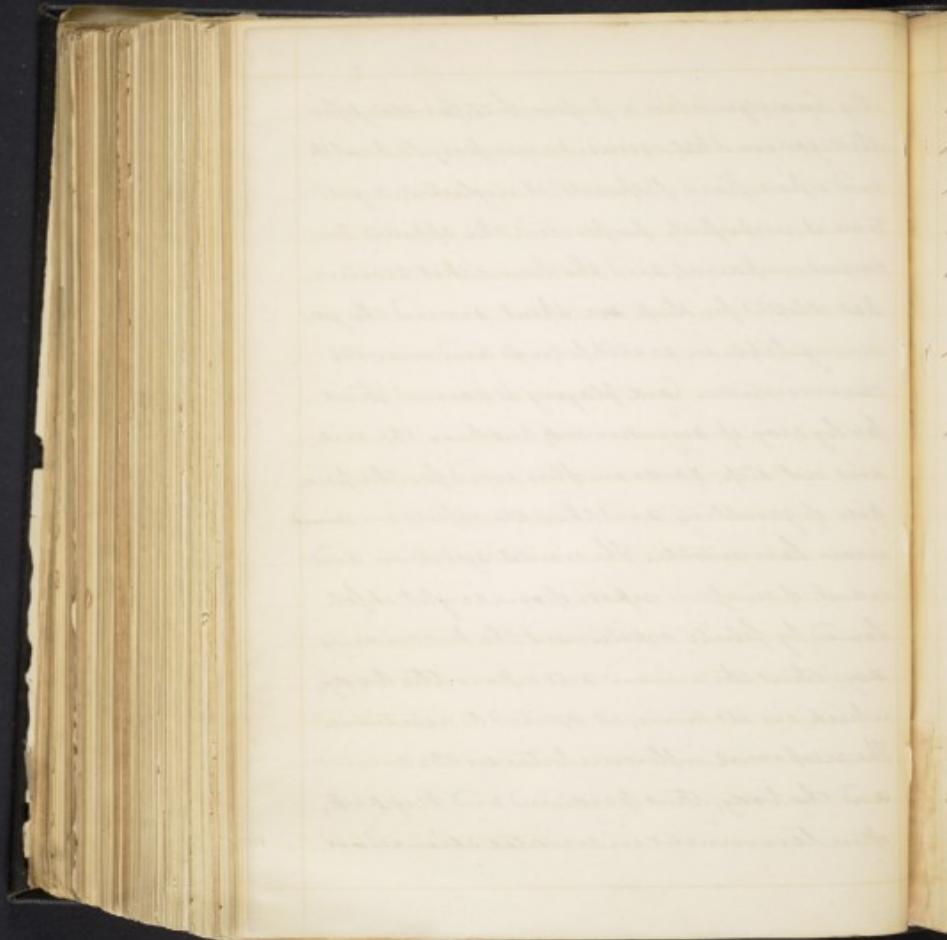
the sympathy of the spectator becomes incapable of being excited by real distress."

It is not our province in this place to speak of the evils done to society by the tendency theatre here to corrupt the morals and deprave the taste of the age.

Sedentary amusements, notwithstanding the many dear friends they may have both among the male and female sex, ought serious to health and happiness. of this species of amusement card-playing deserves the first notice, mainly as it has charms in favour to all other games of the kind, and a more banishing influence over the young mind. We can not for any argument that may be urged in favour of its innocence find proof enough can be adduced to show the positive evil resulting from card-playing.



By indulgence in a passionate fondness for
the game that exercise so necessary to health
and a fine flow of spirits it neglects; when
it is imperfectly performed, the appetite be-
comes impaired, and the hours that nature
has allotted for sleep are spent around the ga-
ming-table in watchfulness and mental
commotion. (And playing at cards) thus
far by way of amusement, but here the evil
does not stop; cards are often used for the pur-
pose of gambling, and then the effects are much
more lamentable. The mental agitation and
want of necessary repose of one night is fol-
lowed by feeble exertment the succeeding
day; thus the mind acts upon the body,
which, in its turn, is excited to reaction.
The reciprocal influence between the mind
and the body, thus produced and kept up,
often terminates in mental alienations,



or more complete mania. In this state, the unhappy gambler may linger out a protracted existence amid the gloom of despair, or he sooner or later terminate his sad condition by committing the rash act of suicide.

This card playing does not always lead to this unhappy issue, yet when practised only as an amusement a great degree of prudence and resolution is required to withstand its charms.

The system requires regularity in habits of exercise, diet, sleep etc, but a regard for all these salutary habits is sacrificed to the pleasure and of whist.

Novel-reading should not be passed over in silence; but the above remarks are more or less applicable in this case, equally as to all other amusements of a sedentary nature; and of course need not a repetition.

C. Ticknor 16 M. Eight.

